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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION: VOTERS CALLED FOR CHANGE, PARLIAMENT
AND GOVERNMENT SHOULD ANSWER THE CALL

REF: KUWAIT 500

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Summary and Comment. In Kuwait's May 16 elections, the Parliament gained four women and Islamists registered significant losses. Moreover, liberals and Shias increased their representation. One day after the results were announced, several Kuwaiti Arabic dailies editorialized about Kuwait's political future; many writers expressed high expectations. Some editorials focused on the historical victory for Kuwaiti woman after only four years of experience with full political rights. Others described the election results as a "corrective movement." Almost all editorials applauded the "good selection" made by Kuwaiti voters and painted the results as a response to the Amir's March statement calling for voters to make the "best choice". A number of analysts called on the new Parliament and the new upcoming government to work hand in hand to answer the call from voters for successful government and an end to gridlock. End Summary and Comment.

Positive Outlook and High Expectations

¶2. (U) Liberal Arabic local daily Al-Qabas provided its editorial page as a platform for the head of Al-Qabas Magazine, Mrs. Saadiya Mafrah, who editorialized about Kuwait's historical achievements in the region: "Only four years after the Kuwaiti woman obtained her political rights, the entire world was amazed by her victory in reaching the National Assembly by four seats. In this first parliamentary experience, the Kuwaiti woman has clearly surpassed her Arab colleagues. She was able to do so because of the power that was given to her by the people, who are capable of shaping miracles when they want to!"

¶3. Ahmad Al-Jarallah, moderate and editor-in-chief of pro-government Arabic daily al-Seyassah, noted "for the first time, the elections outcome meets with what the public is looking for in terms of refusing sectarian and awful agendas. The elections outcome gives the impression that the new National Assembly is going to complete its four-year mandate. It is not going to be affected by the deadlock members of parliament, since this time they are less in number than the independent and liberal members of parliament."

¶4. Chief Editor of pro-government and moderate Arabic daily Awan, Dr. Mohammad Al-Rmeihi, highlighted in his editorial the importance of moderation and selectivity in life. Dr. Al-Rmeihi wrote, "His Highness the Amir trusted in Kuwait's citizens who proved him right in voting for moderation." Moreover, on the issue of the electoral victory for Kuwaiti women, he believes "this change is going to positively affect the Kuwaiti democratic process as well as the relationship between the legislative and the executive authorities."

New Parliament, New Government, New Responsibilities

¶5. Liberal columnist at Al-Qabas, Abdul Latif Al-Duaij, described Kuwait's parliamentary election results as a corrective movement. Al-Duaij concluded that "the result of the results is now in the hands of the government, which is supposed to invest in this corrective movement and lift the country up from stagnation. This will not happen unless the government invests all its political gains in the future and in refusing backwardness and ideological extremism."

¶6. Conservative Arabic daily Alam Alyawm published an analysis by Liberal columnist Ahmad Deyyan. Deyyan explained that trends and signs evidenced in the election results go beyond the electoral dimension to touch the current and future social and political environment. "The relatively low voting rate," he said, "could be seen either as a temporary phenomenon or a warning bell that voters are bored and negative with regard to the political situation in Kuwait."

¶7. Conservative Arabic daily Al-Watan published an editorial under the headline "Your Highness, at Your Service!" In the editorial, Al-Watan noted that "the Kuwaiti voters and citizens conveyed their message of change; they addressed those who preferred deadlock instead of development and productivity. The responsibility should now be assumed by the upcoming government to keep pace with voters and to strive in order to give Kuwait's democracy its brightness back."

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JONES